

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 SECTO 03030 291432Z
ACTION NODS-00

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O 291400Z MAR 77 ZFF-6
FM USDEL SECRETARY IN MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTO 03030

NODIS CHEROKEE

TO THE PRESIDENT FROM SECRETARY VANCE

WHITE HOUSE ALSO FOR BRZEZINSKI

STATE FOR ACTING SECRETARY ONLY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS), PFOR, UR
SUBJ: SALT DISCUSSIONS

1. MY SECOND SESSION WITH GROMYKO AND HIS TEAM TOOK PLACE THIS MORNING BUT DID NOT COVER SALT AS HAD BEEN INDICATED LAST NIGHT. RATHER WE SPENDT TWO HOURS ON MBFR AND THE MIDDLE EAST. TALKS WILL RESUME LATER THIS AFTERNOON. NOTHING NEW EMERGED IN THE MORNING SESSION.
2. GROMYKO LEAD OFF WITH A PRESENTATION ON MBFR, STRESSING THEIR VIEW THAT REDUCTIONS CANNOT UPSET THE CORRELATION OF FORCES ESTABLISHED IN CENTRAL EUROPE. HE EMPHASIZED THAT ASSYMETRICAL REDUCTIONS, AS WE PROPOSED, COULD NOT LEAD TO AN AGREEMENT. HE MISSTATED OUR POSITION CLAIMING THAT WE WANTED THEM TO WITHDRAW THEIR TANKS AND ONLY THEN BEGIN NEGOTIATIONS. HE ALSO

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MADE A POINT OF SAYING THAT THE SOVIET SIDE WANTED THE TALKS TO CONTINUE, AND WOULD NOT BE THE FIRST TO PERMIT A BREAKDOWN.

3. THE ONLY ITEM OF POSSIBLE INTEREST WAS HIS PRESSING FOR SYMBOLIC US-SOVIET CUTS, THOUGH I ASSUME THAT THIS ONLY REPRESENTS A RESTATEMENT OF THEIR PROPOSAL FOR A US-SOVIET REDUCTION

BY 2-3 PERCENT OF NATO AND WARSAW PACT FORCES.

4. I BORE DOWN HEAVILY ON THE NEED FOR RECOGNITION AND AGREEMENT ON TWO KEY PRINCIPLES: (1) ON ESTABLISHING PARITY OF MILITARY MANPOWER, AND (2) ON ACCEPTING COLLECTIVITY OF OBLIGATIONS, I.E., NO NATIONAL SUB-CEILING, EXCEPT ON US-SOVIET FORCES. I RAISED THE GREAT DISPARITY IN MANPOWER AS INDICATED BY OUR DATA AND THE CONFLICT OVER DATA THEY HAD PRESENTED. THIS LED TO A DISCUSSION ON FURTHER EXCHANGE OF DATA. I PRESSED FOR SOVIET FIGURES AND INDICATED THAT WE WOULD DISCUSS WITH OUR ALLIES WHETHER WE COULD EXCHANGE DATA ON NON-US AND SOVIET FORCES, AS THEY WANT.

5. GROMYKO MADE A VERY LONG PRESENTATION ON THE MIDDLE EAST COMPLAINING BITTERLY THAT PREVIOUS AMERICAN ADMINISTRATIONS HAD AGREED TO JOINT ACTION WITH THE USSR REACHING A SETTLEMENT, BUT THAT THIS WAS NEVER CARRIED OUT. HE THEN ELABORATED ON THREE PRINCIPLES OF A SOLUTION (1) NO ACQUISITION OF TERRITORY BY WAR; (2) ACCEPTANCE OF THE NATIONAL RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND (3) GUARANTEE OF A SETTLEMENT, BY THE US AND USSR AND OTHERS. DURING THIS DISCOURSE, HE WAS CRITICAL OF US FOR ENCOURAGING ISRAELI ANNEXATIONISM BY TALKING ABOUT DEFENSIBLE BORDERS.

4. I POINTED OUT AT LENGTH THE VARIOUS STEPS WHICH WE HAD TAKEN TO COOPERATE WITH THEM BY KEEPING THEM INFORMED ON MY TRIP AND OUR SUBSEQUENT TALKS WITH THE MIDDLE EAST LEADERS.

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I THEN BEGAN TO SET FORTH OUR POSITION ON THE GENERAL SITUATION AND HIS VARIOUS POINTS. BEFORE I FINISHED GROMYKO ASKED FOR AN ADJOURNMENT SAYING HE HAD URGENT BUSINESS ON "INTERNAL MATTERS". MY GUESS IS THAT THEY ARE HAVING A POLITBURO MEETING ON SALT.

5. IN MY DISCUSSION, I SAID THAT YOU HAD INDICATED ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS YOUR DESIRE FOR PROGRESS. I DISCUSSED THE QUESTION OF BORDERS, AND DEFENSE ARRANGEMENTS IN CONNECTION WITH SOLUTION OF BOUNDARIES, INDICATING WE WERE WILLING TO CONSIDER VARIOUS ARRANGEMENTS SUCH AS OBSERVERS, PATROLS, DE-MILITARIZATION, ALL OF WHICH COULD BE DISCUSSED AT GENEVA. ON THE PALESTINIANS, I SAID THE KEY QUESTION WAS RECOGNITION OF ISRAELI RIGHT TO EXIST AND URGED THE SOVIETS TO USE THEIR INFLUENCE TO MODERATE PLO POSITION. I SAID WE WOULD INFORM THE SOVIET SIDE OF OUR VARIOUS DISCUSSIONS, AS I HAD AFTER MY RETURN FROM THE AREA. I NOTED THAT GROMYKO HAD SAID THAT IT WAS UP TO ARABS TO DECIDE ON A SINGLE DELEGATION OR OTHER FORM OF PARTICIPATION IN GENEVA, BUT

THAT I HAD FOUND THE ARABS BADLY DIVIDED ON THIS SUBJECT. GROMYKO PRESSED ON WHETHER WE WERE STATING A NEW POSITION ON PARTICIPATION, AND I REPLIED THAT WE WOULD DISCUSS THE ISSUE AFTER WE HAD COMPLETED CONSULTATIONS WITH ARAB LEADERS WHO WERE COMING TO WASHINGTON AND THOSE CONSULTATIONS WOULD BE COMPLETED BY MID-MAY WHEN HE AND I WOULD MEET AGAIN.

6. I INTEND TO RETURN TO MIDDLE EAST DISCUSSION IN ANOTHER SESSION.

7. BEFORE WE BROKE I COMPLAINED TO GROMYKO THAT THEY WERE PUTTING OUR TASS STATEMENTS THAT RESEMBLED COMMUNIQUE, INCLUDING CHARACTERIZATIONS OF MY POSITION, AND THAT UNILATERAL COMMUNIQUE MUST STOP. HE CLAIMED THAT THESE WERE ONLY PRESS REPORTS: I WAS CONCERNED LEST TASS REPORTS CREATE THE IMPRESSION THAT WE WERE NOT STATING OUR OWN POSITIONS, ESPECIALLY ON HUMAN RIGHTS. AT LEAST ONE REPORTER HERE THOUGHT
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THAT I HAD NOT REBUTTED BREZHNEV ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN OUR FIRST DISCUSSION.

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